

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /054 W  
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R 251351Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1037  
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY OSLO  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 0396

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, FI  
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER MIETTUNEN STATES HE FAVORS FORMATION  
OF MAJORITY GOVERNMENT

REF: (A) HELSINKI 0382, (B) HELSINKI 0393

1. THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUING SPECULATION OVER PAST SEVERAL  
WEEKS ON LIFE-EXPECTANCY OF CURRENT CENTRIST PARTIES MINORITY  
GOVT. AND POSSIBILITIES OF IT BEING EXPANDED TO A MAJORITY GOVT.  
THAT WOULD INCLUDE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP).

2. PM MARTTI MIETTUNEN ADDRESSED ISSUE DIRECTLY FEB. 24 IN  
BREAKFAST MEETING WITH NEWSPAPER POLITICAL EDITORS. HE GAVE  
HIS VIEW THAT POSSIBILITIES OF MINORITY GOVT TO STABILIZE  
ECONOMIC SITUATION AND GET REASONABLE SOLUTION TO LABOR MARKET  
PROBLEM ARE LIMITED, AND THAT MAJORITY GOVT INCLUDING SDP  
WOULD BE BETTER ABLE DEAL WITH SUCH PROBLEMS. HE REJECTED  
POSSIBILITY THAT GOVT COULD EXPAND TO INCLUDE EITHER THE  
CONSERVATIVE PARTY (BECAUSE THIS WOULD DIVIDE POLITICAL  
SCENE TOO RADICALLY BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT) OR COMMUNIST  
PARTY (BECAUSE COMMUNIST INTERNAL HARMONY EFFORTS ARE  
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LARGELY ALONG LINES OF HARDLINE TAOIST MINORITY, WHICH  
HAS NEVER SUPPORTED GOVT INCOMES POLICY). REF A DISCUSSED  
RECENT COMMUNIST PARTY DEVELOPMENTS, ALTHOUGH REASON FOR  
MAJORITY FACTION MOVEMENT TOWARD MINORITY POSITIONS NOT  
CLEAR.

3. THUS, MIETTUNEN SEES INCLUSION OF SDP AS OFFERING ONLY

REALISTIC CHANCE FOR MAJORITY GOVT. HE SAID IT MAY BE THAT ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY DURING DIFFICULT TIME NOT VERY ENTICING, BUT POINTED OUT THAT DANISH ELECTION SHOWED VOTERS WILL SUPPORT POLITICAL GROUPS DEMONSTRATING ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY DURING DIFFICULT TIMES. HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER SDP WOULD ACCEPT CHALLENGE; IF IT DOES, SDP WILL HAVE ITS OWN POSITIONS, AND AGREEMENT BETWEEN SDP AND CENTER PARTIES MAY TAKE SOME TIME. MIETTUNEN EXPRESSED OPINION THAT MARCH 9 MEETING OF SDP GOVERNING PARTY COUNCIL WILL SHOW WHETHER THERE ANY CHANCE OF GOVT EXPANSION. MEANWHILE, HE SAID MINORITY GOVT MUST NOT TAKE ANY STEPS WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE FORMATION OF MAJORITY GOVT. FINALLY, HE INDICATED THAT IF MAJORITY GOVT NOT POSSIBLE, MINORITY GOVT WILLING TO CONTINUE, BUT WOULD HAVE TO PROCEED MORE SLOWLY THAN WOULD MAJORITY GOVT.

4. MIETTUNEN'S STATEMENTS ADD TO SPECULATION ON GOVT COMPOSITION WHICH HAS BEEN A STAPLE OF FINNISH POLITICAL DISCUSSION SINCE FORMATION OF CURRENT GOVT LAST SEPTEMBER. SDP CHAIRMAN TOLD EMBOFF RECENTLY HE BELIEVES SDP SHOULD JOIN GOVT COALITION IN TIME TO INFLUENCE 1978 BUDGET PREPARATION. HE DID NOT ELABORATE BUT GIVEN BUDGET CYCLE, HIS COMMENT WOULD IMPLY SDP RETURN BY APRIL OR MAY AT LATEST. MIETTUNEN'S REFERENCE TO LABOR MARKET PROBLEM MAY ALSO HAVE ALLUDED TO PENDING WAVE OF STRIKES (REF B) WHICH HAS ALSO BEEN CITED INCREASINGLY AS REASON FOR EARLY MOVE TO MAJORITY GOVT. ANOTHER REASON SOMETIMES MENTIONED IS BELIEF IT HIGHLY DESIRABLE HAVE MAJORITY GOVT IN PLACE BEFORE PRES. KEKKONEN'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO SOVIET UNION, CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORTEDLY PLANNED FOR MAY.

5. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED IN FINNISH POLITICAL CIRCLES THAT LACK OF INTERNAL CONSENSUS WITHIN SDP HAS BEEN MAJOR OBSTACLE TO FORMATION OF MAJORITY GOVT. MIETTUNEN'S STATEMENTS SEEM TO PLACE THE BALL FIRMLY IN SDP COURT, PARTICULARLY HIS OBSERVATION THAT THE QUESTION IS UP TO MARCH 9 MEETING OF SDP PARTY COUNCIL AND HIS REFERENCE TO THE RECENT DANISH ELECTIONS WHERE DANISH SDP FACED UP TO ITS GOVT RESPONSIBILITY IN DIFFICULT TIME, TO USE MIETTUNEN'S OWN EXPRESSION. QUESTION NOW BECOMES WHETHER SDP INTERNAL SITUATION SUFFICIENTLY SORTED OUT TO PERMIT PARTY COUNCIL SUPPORT SORSA'S EXPRESSED OBJECTIVE OF SDP RETURN TO GOVT. AUSTAD

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009